el oído pensante

http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante

ISSN 2250-7116

Portal de Publicaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CAICYT-CONICET)

Vol. 3, nº1 (2015)

Review / Reseña / Resenha

Both, Arnd Adje and Matthias Stöckli (eds.). 2012. *Flower World. Music Archeology of The Americas. Mundo Florido. Arqueomusicología de las Américas.* Vol.1. Berlin: Ekho Verlag. 174 pages.

by Matthias Lewy
Universidade de Brasília, Brazil
matthiaslewy@gmail.com

Flower world is a new series edited by Arnd Adje Both and Matthias Stöckli which focuses on ancient music and music-related activities in Pre-Columbian Americas. The title *Flower World* refers to the sacred place and mythological world in ancient Mesoamerica.

The main topic of the series is in archaeomusicology and its new methods and theoretical debates as the archaeology of senses and archaeoacoustics. In his preface Adje Both discusses the "ethnoarchaeological problem" when showing the difficulties of searching for analogies and similarities of ancient Pre-Columbian musical praxis in musical activities of recent Amerindian groups. Both's introduction to the series is followed by Matthias Stöckli's preface to the first edition, as he presents the eight articles. He argues, as well as Both, that the unifying aim is to reveal the existence of important cultural aspects of pre-Columbian music making with musical activities of recent Amerindian groups.

So the first contribution, entitled "Ancient Pututus Contextualized: Integrative Achaeoacoustics at Chavín de Huántar, Peru", is written by Miriam A. Kolar, John W. Prick, R. Cook and Jonthan Abel.

The "integrative" part here is reflected by the method used. Therefore, the sound possibilities of the *pututus* (horn shells/strombus galeatus) were measured and related to the landscape as well as to the building complex of the archaeological site (approx.1200-500 BC). The interaction between sound perception and sound production is analysed by interpretations of graphical/iconographical representations, physical and acoustic analyses of the shell horns artefact comparative ethnographic surveys of similar aerophones, observational tests in associated contexts and contextualized psycho-acoustic experimentation with recorded shell horn artefact or replica sound stimuli.

The authors point out that the architectural construction of three tubes had been designed to transmit frequencies of 500-1000 Hz, a spectrum which fits perfectly the one of the shell horns.

The tubes led from the oracle (*Lanzón*) inside the building to the main plaza where probably Pilgrims listened to the 'voice of the oracle' produced by the shell horns. It should be underlined that the multisensory building complex focused on auditory perception. But, if an elite intentionally manipulated the Pilgrims, this should be rethought. Maybe they only reproduced a necessary soundscape to carry out their role as agents between the Pilgrims and the non-human like deities, spirits, or even objects, as the mentioned stone oracle.

That would fit the argumentation of Gary Tomlinson who presents his revised and shortened article "Inca song work, 1535" which was published in "Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voices in the Era of European Contact" (Tomlinson 2007) under the title "Inca singing in Cuzco". Here, he analyses the historical source: "Relación de muchas cosas acaescidas en el Peru" written by Cristobál de Molina and/or Bartolomé de Segovia. The focus is on the performance of Inca Manco, son of Huayna Capac, who chaired the community of nobles (*orejones*), mummified remains of dead rulers (*mallquis*) and virgin devotees belonging to the households of deceased Incas (*mamaconas*) on a festivity called "Inca Raimi", dated by Tomlinson in April 1535 after a suggestion by Guaman Poma de Ayala (1987). The author describes the eight days singing, noting that it starts every day before sunrise with a weak voice. The Inca and all nobles increase the volume and raise the pitch until midday. From that time on to sunset, the pitches fall and the voices become weak. The singing and dancing finished after sunrise one day and started on the following day before sunset again.

Tomlinson interprets the singing and dancing practice as a mimesis of the sun's course which transmits energy to the Inca as central sound agent –"the flux of *taki"*. This energy (*taki*) flows through the singing Inca into the landscape via the *ceque* (the sacred lines oriented by astronomical events) and *huaca* (sacred places/deities shrines) systems from the centre to periphery. Tomlinson finds similarities of that non-logocentrical and non-European thinking and acting defined as patterning by means of comparison with the *quipu* and *kero* painting systems, where one medium is connected to another by patterns.

His theoretical frame of "songwork" (Tomlinson 2007) is the base for Helena Simonett's article: "Cantos de Venado. New Insights into Mexican Indigenous Performance and Composition Practices". She follows Tomlinson when arguing that a song can not only be interpreted by its lyrics but by its references to place and efficacy. It is the sense of the world embodied in song as well as the cosmogonic powers of singing which need to be revealed. Motivated by Tomlinson's work about the Cantares Mexicanos (2007), where he presents his idea of "metonymy" instead of Leon-Portilla's (2011: 179) metaphor-based concept of *diafracismo,* Simonett applies this metonymy theory to the singing praxis of the Yoreme (Sinaloa/México) where she carried out her fieldwork. As an example she presents the Yoreme version of the Aztec *in xochitl in cuicatl* which is *seguee buicac* in Yoreme language. In this song the term "deer" (*maaso*) stands as metonym to "flower" (*seegua*). She explains that in Yoreme sound ontological thinking a song needs to be seen. Therefore, the song can only be sung in Yoreme and not in Spanish language. One effect of that sensual connection between seeing and singing is the different song versions. It can sound different every day as it is always an interpretation of an image, which is not a specified landscape or photographical

representation, but an "image of a more real reality" as Simonett's informant Bernardo Esquer López mentioned. His "inner eye" is less visual but multi sensorial; it is "seeing the present combined with the past" (Simonett 2012: 148). She concludes that the Yoreme "song work" and the comparison with the Aztec musical practice demonstrates a continuity or an "existence of a hard nucleus" (López Austin 1997: 6) between past and present according to Helena Simonett.

Matthew Looper writes about "Ritual Dance and Music in Ancient Maya Society". He analyses the "Dance and Cosmos" of Uaxactún Group B, mural Structure B-XIII, the paintings of room 3 in Bonampak and the Site R Lintel 4 - King of Yaxchilán. Dance and music performances he understands as "an embodiment of the sacred realm", but he does not refer to Tomlinson's metonymy thesis when he says that through performance the participants were "transformed into images of god and/or spirits or achieved an altered state of consciousness". He suggests an in-between state of mimesis and/or transformation when he deduces that "thus, representations often blur the distinction between dancing humans and gods or other spirits".

It needs to be mentioned that the author discusses gender specific aspects as well as dance and music performances of the non-nobles Maya people, bringing together archaeological finds, ethno historical sources (Diego de Landa 1938) and ethnographic data (Thompson 2007).

In his contribution, "Sonidos en piedra. El canto, la música y el baile en el Monumento 21 de Bilbao, Cotzumalguapa, Guatemala", Oswaldo Chinchilla Mazariegos discusses the social and performative status as well as the musical action of three persons carved in that stone monument around 650-950 DC. In the middle of the painting a *danzante* can be recognized, who cuts with a knife the fruits which come out of his mouth. Mazariego classifies him as member of the noble upper class. Next to the *danzante* a musician with a sacrificial knife in his mouth can be identified, who holds a puppet in one hand and beats a membranophone or idiophone with the other one. The instrument is not easy to identify but the drumstick seems to be produced by a human thigh bone. The third person, an old woman, is classified by Mazariegos as the head of the ritual, as she receives the fruits from the *danzante*. The idea that the *danzante* "sings the fruits" refers to the idea of Linda O'Brien (1975:256, in: Chinchilla Mazariegos 2012: 121) when she says that "the words which come out of the mouth are creating the reality they contain". It reminds us of Tomlinson's (2007) idea of metonymy practice again, when materialization is realized by "singing things".

The Maya slit drum "tunk'ul" is the theme of Juan Carillo Gonzaléz, who finds the instrument in different contexts. In ceremonies like fire sacrifice or in war times, the drum was used together with singing and other instruments, e.g. flutes, whistles, tortoise shells or shell horns. The drum also played in important role in agricultural rituals as evidence can be found in the Colonial era. González interprets the sound of the drums not as a manifestation, representation or even metonym but as an agent used in the process of trans-specific communication between humans and non-humans.

Teresa M. Campos' contribution: "Los aerófones de barro del Valle de Sula, Honduras" includes illustrations by David Banegas. She describes and classifies some of the 1326 aerophones which are parts of the archaeological collection of the Anthropological Museums San Pedro de Sula.

The clay instruments can be assigned to the Classical period (0-900 DC). There are simple and double whistles, simple and poliglobular ocarinas as well as tubular flutes in zoomorphic, anthropomorphic and hybrid shapes. As most authors of the series, Campos deduces the function of the aerophones with the help of ethno historical and ethnographical data comparison. She argues that they were used for entertainment during festivities, for insulting or frightening the enemy and for organizing their own company during war times. She argues that the sound of the instruments served for the identification of its player and had been used as a kind of sound agent as well.

The final contribution is the work of Mark Howell with the title: "An organology of the Americas as painted by John White and other artists". One of the other artists is the French painter Jacques le Moyne whose drawings and paintings where used next to the ones of John White's as illustrations in Theodor de Bry's (1590-1634) "Grand Voyages". Howell reflects about the painted instruments as gourd rattles, valveless tube trumpets, tinklers and a percussion idiophone which had been used and portrayed in different music and dance performances (initiation, war, marriages).

He also takes archaeological artefacts and ethnographical sources into account, showing rattles and tinklers among the Timucua (in today's Florida/US), where also a rarely found stone idiophone was captured in a painting by Moyne. Howell refers to a turtle shaped idiophone of the Mississippian-affiliated group Cherokee (Mooney 1995) as only evidence for the existence of such instruments. So he concludes that more archaeological artefacts need to be excavated in general for proving the painted instruments.

Finally, the first Volume of the *Flower World* is a successful start for presenting archaeomusicological study themes. It can only be hoped that the series will be followed by many more. The recently released second volume demonstrates a positive tendency.

Maybe some more ideas, experimentations and searches for Amerindian sound ontologies would be interesting next to classical methods and theories. That means for example more discussions about the already sketched topics of trans-specific communication, manifestations and or representations and transformations in (re-)constructed performances.

Bibliography

Chinchilla Mazariegos, Oswaldo. 2012. "Sonidos en piedra: El canto, la música y el baile en el Monumento 21 de Bilbao, Cotzumalguapa, Guatemala". In: Both, Arnd Adje and Matthias Stöckli (eds.). *Flower World. Music Archeology of The Americas. Mundo Florido. Arqueomusicología de las Américas*. Vol.1, pp. 109-126. Berlin: Ekho Verlag.

De Bry's, Theodor. 1590-1634. *Grand Voyages: America.* London: The British Library.

De Landa, Diego. 1938. *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*. Mérida: Triay e Hijos.

Guaman Poma de Ayala. 1987. "Nueva crónica y buen gobierno", *Historia* 16. 3 Vols. Madrid.

León-Portilla, Miguel. 2011. *Cantares mexicanos*. México: UNAM.

López Austin. 1997. *Tamoanchan, Tlalocan: Places of Mist*. Niwot: University Press of Colorado.

Mooney, James. 1995. *Myths of Cherokee.* New York: Dover Publications.

O'Brien, Linda Lee. 1975. *Songs of the Face of the Earth: Ancestor Songs of the Tzutuhil-Maya of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala.* PhD thesis. Los Ángeles: University of California.

Simonett, Helena. 2012. "Cantos de Venado. New Insights into Mexican Indigenous Performance and Composition Practices". In: Arnd Adje Both and Matthias Stoeckli (eds.), *Flower World. Music Archaeology of the Americas*, Vol.1, pp. 137-154. Berlin: Ekho.

Thompson, J. Eric S. 2007. *Historia y religión de los mayas*. México: Siglo XXI.

Tomlinson, Gary. 2007. *Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biography / Biografía / Biografia

Matthias Lewy is a postdoctoral research fellow in Ethnomusicology at the University of Brasilia (UNB), Brazil. His focus is on Amerindian sound ontologies in the Guianas as well as in ancient Mesoamerica.

How to cite / Cómo citar / Como citar

Lewy, Matthias. 2015. Reseña de Both, Arnd Adje and Matthias Stöckli (eds.). 2012. *Flower World. Music Archeology of The Americas. Mundo Florido. Arqueomusicología de las Américas. Vol.1*. Berlin: Ekho Verlag. *El oído pensante* 3 (1). http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante [Web: DATE].